

Francis, Ronald - Salt Lake City, UT

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USDA AG AIR QUALITY MEETING HELD IN SALT LAKE CITY

NRCS Utah helped host a national meeting of the USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force, held in Salt Lake City May 13 - 16. Task Force members represent institutions, agricultural groups and government agencies having expertise in agriculture, air quality, human health and atmospheric science. Congressional mandate requires the group to review federal research, coordinate inter-governmental air quality policy, and make sure research is peer reviewed and that erroneous data are corrected. To learn more about the Task Force visit: http://www.airquality.nrcs.usda.gov/AAQTF/Congressional_mandate/index.html. Since the meeting was held in Utah, local agricultural, environmental and air quality experts were invited to share work being done in Utah on agriculture air quality issues, such as wildfires and dust storms.

The first day included a welcome to Utah by Governor Huntsman (via video), Agriculture Commissioner Leonard Blackham, and Assistant State Conservationist Lisa Coverdale (representing Sylvia Gillen). A round robin panel discussion centered on Burning Issue in Utah and the Region. Utah panel participants were Rush Valley Rancher Darrell Johnson and Cheryl Heying, director of the Utah Division of Air Quality.

The second day of meetings included such topics as greenhouse gas and climate change issues, including credit trading. Task Force subcommittees, such as the Animal Feeding Operations Subcommittee, presented new information, held deliberations and reported recommendations that the full Task Force may take to the Secretary of Agriculture.



On the third day, NRCS State Agronomist Niels Hansen (assisted by Area Agronomist Marlon Winger and DC Jon Hardman) organized a tour in Northern Utah that featured methane digester activity on the Wadeland South Dairy and the Ballard Hog Farm, and a preliminary look at planned air quality monitoring on the Ritewood Egg Farm in Cache Valley.

Since the Task Force selected Utah as its meeting site, NRCS Utah was asked to

host the event. Under the leadership of State Conservationist Sylvia Gillen, the following NRCS staffers assisted and were recognized by Assistant USDA Secretary Gary Mast for their role in the success of the meeting: The accompanying photo shows (left to right) NRCS Deputy Chief for Science and Technology Bill Puckett, Dee Cummings, Ron Francis, Gary

Mast, Niels Hansen, and Lisa Rice. Also recognized, but not present for the photo, were Tammy Egerstrom, Jon Hardman, Marlon Winger, and Marie Gonnella.

 Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah

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